

## **NC Family Caregiver Support Program Best Practices**

Name of project/activity: **Support group and caregiver education**

Family Caregiver Program Service Category(ies): Category III

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### **Description:**

*From a county DSS Adult Services Section:*

We celebrated Caregiver month, late, at our January Adult social work services staff meeting. We assembled a caregiver panel of 4 caregivers who had had Caregiver support services who could help us understand better the impact the program has had on their lives and how we might better serve. They were honest and open and talked about how in some cases there was no other help available except CGS. They discussed crisis situations involving their own health and were at a loss as to what they would do with their loved one. They talked about "sinking fast" and how the program had kept them afloat. They were all delighted that they were able to keep their loved one at home and know that their loved one was safe. They stated their appreciation for the openness of social workers when they visit their homes, the individualized attention, and the efficiency of the services (both in home respite and Adult Day Care). They talked about the isolation they felt and were so grateful for the respite to get out at least a little. They shared the new insights they have had along the way, many of which they have learned through reading resource materials provided through CGS or in one of the caregiver education events we have offered.

### **Expected Outcome:**

The outcomes for the caregivers were quite obvious and they expressed them well – peace of mind, opportunities to be heard, some time to themselves, knowledge that someone was helping them put crisis plans together, being able to keep their loved one at home, opportunities to know what services are available, opportunities to learn to take care of themselves-even being given permission to take care of themselves!

The outcomes for our social work staff had greater impact than we had thought possible. Illustrative of this is one social worker relaying after the meeting that just the day prior she had thought "I can't do this anymore, nobody really cares about what we do". She said that the meeting and hearing from the caregivers had renewed her enthusiasm and energy. She said she heard how important our jobs are and she takes heart from the wisdom of the caregivers.

We thanked the caregivers for coming to meet with us and they thanked us for asking them to come. It doesn't get much better than that and it is because the caregiver support program is working so well.

### **Target population:**

Family caregivers and professional staff

<b>Community Partners Involved:</b> Family caregivers and professional staff
<b>Funding Sources and other support:</b>
<b>Barriers and challenges and how they were addressed:</b>